

(b) No adverse effect on availability of cheaper drugs and medicines for common man in the country has come to the notice of this Department.

(c) In view of above, does not arise.

Custom duty on import of RBD

3229. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) in view of the unprecedented rise in edible oil prices compared to that of last year, whether Government would exempt custom duty on import of RBD Palmoline Oil;

(b) if not, whether Government propose to reduce the custom duty by 40 to 50 per cent; and

(c) whether it is a fact that Government of Gujarat desires to import approximately 6000 to 7000 MTs of RBD Palmoline Oil for distribution of the same during Janmashtami and Diwali festivals to Antyodaya and BPL card holders at subsidized rates; if so, whether Government would exempt or reduce custom duty on the same as a special case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government, considering the present trend in prices of edible oils, have reduced the import duty on RBD Palmolien from 67.5% to 57.5% w.e.f. 13.4.2007.

(c) The import of edible oils (except Coconut Oil) is under Open General Licence (OGL) and there is no import allocation from Central Government. The State Government is at liberty to import edible oil according to their requirements.

Rise in prices of pulses

3230. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been seized of the steep rise in the prices of pulses during the last two years;

(b) the details of prices as prevailed since January, 2004, month-wise;

(c) the details of estimated volume of demand of pulses vis-a-vis supplies during the period;

(d) the details of volume of pulses produced in the country during the period;

(e) the chronological details of actions taken, if any, towards arresting the rise of its prices during the period;

(f) whether actions were taken for detection of hoarding of pulses;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Government is aware of increase in prices of pulses during the last two years.

(b) Details of movement of prices of pulses since January 2004 till April 2007 are given in Statement (See below).

(c) and (d) Details of estimated demand, production and imports of pulses during 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 are as under:

(in million tonnes)

Year	Total estimated demand@	Production	Imports
2004-05	17.06	13.13	1.34
2005-06	17.38	13.39	1.61
2006-07	17.71	14.10*	1.75**

@As per Planning Commission Working Group for Tenth Plan.

*Third Advance Estimates released by Department of Agriculture

**upto January, 2007

(e) With a view to contain the rise in prices of pulses, Government took, *inter-alia* the following measures:

- (i) Customs duty on import of pulses was reduced to zero on 8th June, 2006.
- (ii) Exports of pulses was banned with effect from 22nd June, 2006
- (iii) National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) executed a contract on 30th June, 2006 for import of 49,300 MTs of pulses.

- (iv) The period of validity of import of pulses at zero duty has been extended from 31.3.07 to 1.8.2007 *vide* Notification dated 4th December, 2006.
- (v) The period of ban on export of pulses has been further extended to 31.3.2008 *vide* Notification dated 9th March, 2007.
- (vi) The period of validity of import of pulses at zero duty has been extended further from 1.8.2007 to 31.3.2008 *vide* Notification dated 20th March, 2007.

(f) to (h) In exercise of powers conferred by the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 the Central Government have delegated its powers to State Governments to issue control orders from time to time regulating production, distribution, pricing and other trading aspects. The State Governments have also been empowered under this Act to take action against unscrupulous traders/dealers indulging in malpractices in such essential commodities.

The Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 empowers the Central Government or a State Government to detain persons whose activities are found to be prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies of commodities including PDS items essential to the community.

Therefore, in the context of checking hoarding and blackmarketing of essential commodities in the country, the State Governments and UT Administrations have been impressed upon from time to time to take effective action against unscrupulous persons indulging in hoarding and black-marketing of essential commodities for ensuring easy availability of these items to the common people.

Further, keeping in view the prevailing price situation, the Central Government had issued a Central Order dated 29.08.2006 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to enable the State Governments to invoke Stock Limits in respect of wheat and pulses for a period of 6 months. By virtue of this Order, the State Governments/UT Administrations have been empowered to take effective action to bring out the hoarded stock of these items to ensure their availability to the common people at reasonable prices. Government has, on 27.07.2007, extended the validity of the Central Order by another six months *w.e.f.* 01.03.2007.

Statement*Details of movement of Prices of Pulses*

(Rs. per kg.)

Month	Month-end retail prices at Delhi	
	Gram Dal	Tur Dal
1	2	3
Jan-04	23.00	31.00
Feb-04	23.00	31.00
Mar-04	22.00	29.00
Apr-04	22.50	29.00
May-04	22.00	32.00
Jun-04	23.00	33.00
Jul-04	23.00	34.00
Aug-04	23.00	33.00
Sep-04	23.00	33.50
Oct-04	23.00	34.00
Nov-04	23.00	33.00
Dec-04	23.00	33.00
Jan-05	23.00	31.00
Feb-05	23.00	30.00
Mar-05	21.00	30.50
Apr-05	22.00	30.00
May-05	23.00	30.50
Jun-05	25.00	32.00
Jul-05	25.00	33.00
Aug-05	25.00	33.00
Sep-05	25.00	33.00
Oct-05	25.00	33.00
Nov-05	27.00	33.50

1	2	3
Dec-05	28.00	33.00
Jan-06	27.00	33.00
Feb-06	27.00	33.00
Mar-06	28.00	34.00
Apr-06	29.00	33.00
May-06	31.00	34.00
Jun-06	31.00	34.00
Jul-06	31.00	33.00
Aug-06	35.00	34.00
Sep-06	41.00	35.00
Oct-06	42.50	35.00
Nov-06	41.00	34.00
Dec-06	38.00	33.00
Jan-07	36.00	36.00
Feb-07	35.00	35.00
Mar-07	32.00	35.00
Apr-07	33.00	38.00

SOURCE: State Food and Civil Supplies Department.

Reduction in wheat allocation to Kerala

3231. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:

SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central allocation of wheat to Kerala under the Publication Distribution System has been reduced from 46190 MTs to 19130 MTs;